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“The Name of the Father”

Introduction-

Rom 8:15-16

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. **And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."**

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. NIV

The words a child generally learns first seem to be those terms of endearment toward parents; mama and papa (or dada). Their world is generally defined by those persons. Mom and Dad are everything.

Do you remember the day when you learned that your father or mother had a name? I think I was six when the idea occurred to me (probably brought on by an episode of Sesame Street!). I remember asking my mother what her name was. "Gloria," she said. How odd, I thought, my mother has a name like other people have names!

My father's name was another thing all together. In the world we live in, blended families are a reality. I recall my oldest brother coming to visit us in Spain. My niece couldn't have been three yet. I was asking her to tell me her name and was intent on helping her say it. "Kelly Elizabeth Larum," I said for her. My sister-in-law about lost it. "Her name isn't Larum, it's Russell," she said. Talk about confused! I was about eight or nine and had just found out that my oldest brother had a different last name than I did. "Is that why he calls Dad Uncle John?" I asked one of my other siblings. If we had been rich, I probably would have spend a fortune in counseling just to get past that one day!!

In any event, it all finally got sorted out for me. My oldest brother's Uncle John was really my dad, John Harold Larum. My place in life was secure. I knew my father's name.

Eph 3:14-15

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. NIV

You see, the family of God derives its identity, its very name, from the Father. He it is who frames the reality of our existence. But what is the Father's name?

What Is Your Name?

God Calls Moses by name:

Ex 3:1-6

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up."

- 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."
5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."
6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. NIV

Moses had been hiding from his destiny for forty years. But God had not forgotten him. He appeared to him in a way that was sure to get his attention. Then He called him out by name, "Moses! Moses!"

God Commissions Moses:

Ex 3:7-10 NIV

- 7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.
8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.
9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.
10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

God commissions Moses to carry out the mission he knew he was born to.

Acts 7:25

Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. NIV

The day had arrived. The primary will of God in his life which he had botched by murdering the Egyptian was now finally going to be restored to him. He could return to Egypt now and rescue his people. Moses was ecstatic, he was excited, he was encouraged, he was . . . complaining!

Moses Complains to God:

Ex 3:11-12

- 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"
12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." NIV

Moses' first complaint falls under the "Who Am I?" heading. "Look, Lord, don't know if you've noticed or not, but I'm just a shepherd. I don't even have my own sheep. These critters here belong to my father-in-law. I don't have any vacation time saved up and even if I did, those people back in Egypt aren't going to listen to me. I'm nobody."

Note how the Lord answers this question: I will be with you. Who you are is never as important as who you are with!!

Ex 3:13-15

13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. NIV

This next complaint is the "Who are you?" complaint. Now, it's not the "Who are you?" as in "who do you think you are telling me what to do." No, this one goes a bit deeper than all of that. Moses specifically asked God His name. Why?

Acts 7:22

And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. KJV

*If you are familiar with this account in Exodus, you know that Moses goes on to complain that he can't speak well. So why does Stephen here say that Moses was mighty in **words** and **deeds**? It means that Moses was accustomed to speaking mighty words. As a member of the royal household, he would have been trained not only in the science of the Egyptians (letters, architecture, astronomy) but of the sorcery of the Egyptians as well.*

"Every Egyptian magician . . . believed that he who possessed the true name possessed the very being of god or man, and could force even a deity to obey him as a slave obeys his master. Thus the art of the magician consisted in obtaining from the gods a revelation of their sacred names, and he left no stone unturned to accomplish his end."¹

God doesn't exactly give him an answer. He says, "I AM WHO I AM." God is the self-existent One. Then He tells him His name is YHWH.

Ex 6:2-8

2 God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD.

3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

4 I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.

5 Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

¹ Graham Hancock, *The Sign and Seal*, © Graham Hancock 1992, Touchstone, p. 298. He quotes Sir James Frazer from his work, *The Golden Bough*.

- 6 "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.
- 7 I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.
- 8 And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.'" NIV

As we shall see in this study, it wasn't that the name YHWH wasn't previously known. But the full import of that Name had not been revealed. In Exodus 6, God reveals that YHWH is His covenant name and the name by which He will make Himself know to His people.

The following is a comment on this name by Arthur Green, a Jewish theologian:

“What is its mystery? First, it has no vowels. Without vowels . . . it is impossible to pronounce a word. But Y-H-W-H has no real consonants! Y, H, and W really are blowing sounds, rushings of air through the mouth. . . The point is one of *elusiveness* or abstraction. The name of God is so subtle that it could slip away from you. Y-H-W-H is not a God you can grab hold of and be sure you've got firmly in your mental 'grasp.'

Y-H-W-H is . . . an awkward conflation of all the tenses, and it is really best to translate it as 'Is-Was-Will Be.' [It] is not really a noun at all, but a verb caught in motion, artificially frozen by our simple minds into noun form, a movement conceived as though it were a 'thing.'”²

This then is part of the mystery. This ineffable Name is the name of the Father.

YHWH Is the Father's Name

Deut 32:1-9

- 1 Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.
- 2 Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.
- 3 **I will proclaim the name of the LORD.** Oh, praise the greatness of our God!
- 4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.
- 5 They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation.
- 6 **Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?**
- 7 Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.
- 8 When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.
- 9 For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. NIV

² Arthur Green, *These Are the Words*, Jewish Lights Publishings, © Arthur Green, 1999, p. 3-4

In most versions, the publishers have helped us out by translating the Name YHWH as LORD, all caps. The LORD, He is our Father.

The Lord is our father, the One who made us:

Isa 63:16

Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting. KJV

Isa 64:8

But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. KJV

When Jesus spoke of the Father, He was speaking of YHWH:

Matt 11:25

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, **Father, Lord of heaven and earth**, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. NIV

Isa 66:1

This is what **the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool**. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? NIV

To understand the Father requires a revelation from the Son:

Luke 10:22

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." NIV

Conclusion-

In giving expression to His Name, the LORD has combined it with words that tell us of His quality and character and covenant. In revealing the Father, the Son fulfills all the promises of YHWH.

In the coming weeks we are going to learn of the Father's relationship with us through His redemptive names. They speak of His Godhead and kingship over the family; His provision for and fellowship with His family; how He sanctifies us and fights for us. And in it all we will see how Jesus brought it all to us.

2 Cor 1:19-20

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. NIV

Amen!